

## Weekly Column For June 10, 2004

It did not take me long to think of a topic for this week's column, especially after my one-week absence. This week's column will focus on one of our most treasured traditions- The Flag Day Parade.

The 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Parade to honor Old Glory kicks off this Sunday at 1 p.m. Organizers have said that this will be the biggest march yet, which is impressive considering Troy is known for having the largest Flag Day parade in the country.

The newspapers are saying that this parade will be bigger and bolder than parades from the past, and I for one cannot wait to march on Sunday. And to boot, it looks like we may have one of the better days of the year as far as the weather goes.

With 87 groups participating this year, there is an increase of more than 25 participants to the parade. What a huge group that is! On Friday I will have the opportunity to talk with Time Warner Cable about the parade, and I look forward to telling them what a great job the parade committee did this year.

Where things are different this year, is that the committee went outside the normal course of booking groups and brought in different types of entertainment like stilt walkers, puppets, and other groups that will be more visually enticing to some.

There will also be two military bands participating this year, the first time that has ever occurred. I hope that the residents and visitors to Troy give a Collar City welcome to both the United States Marine Band, and the U.S. Navy Band Northeast.

While I hesitate to place any more importance on parade over the other, this year's march is especially important because of the war in Iraq. We have many local men and women overseas right now, and this parade, many of which were likely attended by those same people in the past, is a way to thank them for their service. I am also happy to hear extra emphasis will be placed on the Pledge of Allegiance this year.

Once the parade is over, do not forget to stop by the Flag Day Festival from 1 p.m. to 9:30 p.m., which will feature music from the Bluz House Rockers and Blue Machine, as well as a beer tent and specialty food tent, sponsored by the Italian Community Center.

One last thing, if you cannot leave the house, or simply want to avoid the tens of thousands of people in downtown on Sunday, the parade will be broadcast live on Time Warner Cable Channel 3.

As usual if you have any questions, comments, concerns, or complaints, do not hesitate to call me at 270-4401, or drop me an e-mail at the Mayor's Office.